THE ADVANTAGE OF THE KINGDOME OF CHRIST,

In the ſhaking of the KINGDOMS of the WORLD:

Or, PROVIDENTIAL ALTERATIONS, in their ſubſerviencie to *CHRIST'S* EXALTATION.

OPENED IN A

SERMON

Preached to the PARLIAMENT, *Octob.* 24. 1651.

A Solemn Day of Thankſgiving for the deſtruction of the *Scots* Army at *Worceſter*, with ſundry other Mercies;

By *JOHN OWEN*, Miniſter of the GOSPEL.

Tueſday the 28. of *Octob.* 1651.

Ordered by the Parliament,

THat the Thanks of this Houſe be given to M. Owen Dean of Chriſt-Church in Oxford, for his great pains taken in his Sermon preached before the Parliament at Margarets Weſtminſter, on Friday the 24. of Octob. (being a day ſet apart for Publike Thanksgiving,) And that he be deſired to Print his Sermon. And that he have the like priviledge in Printing the ſame, as others in like caſe have uſually had; And that the Lord General do give him the Thanks of this Houſe, and deſire him to Print his Sermon accordingly.

HEN. SCOBEL, Cler. Parliamenti.

Printed at *Leith* by *Evan Tyler*, Anno Dom. 1652.

To the supreme Authority of the Nation, the Commons Assembled in PARLIAMENT.

Right Honourable,

IF all the Times *which the* Holy One of Israel *hath caused* to passe over *the Nations of the world, there hath not any* (*from the dayes of old*) *been so filled with eminent Discoveries of his presence, power, and providence, in disposing of all Affairs here below according to the* counsell of his own Will, *as the Season wherein he hath made you* a Spectacle unto men and Angels *being the Instrument in his hand* to perform all his pleasure. *Neither in this Season hath he upon any Opportunity so gloriously laid hold upon his own Strength and Goodnesse, to manifest the* fixedness of his Eye *on those, who are* as the Apple of it, *as in that mighty Deliverance, the* high praises *whereof,* according to his good hand upon you, *you lately rendred unto him.*

The more Beauty and desireableness any design against the Lord Christ is cloathed withall, the more Power and Subtilty it is supported with, the greater is the Brightness of his comming *for its wasting and desolation. With what* Deceivableness of unrighteousnesse, *and* Lyes in Hypocrisie, *the late grand Attempt of those in* Scotland, *with their Adherents* (*which also was of the former, and is gone into Destruction*) *was carried on, is in some measure now made naked, to the loathing of its Abominations. In digging deep to lay a foundation for Blood and Revenge, in covering private and sordid ends with a pretence of things Publique and Glorious; in Limning a face of Religion upon a worldly Stock; in concealing distant Aims, and bloody Animosities, to compasse one Common End, that a Theater might be provided to act several parts upon, in pleading a Necessity from* an Oath of God, *unto most desperate undertakings against God, and such like things as these, perhaps it gives not place to any which former Ages have been acquainted withall. Now to reject all the Claims of the Author and Abettors thereof to any Commission from above, to devest them of all Pretences to Religion and Zeal thereof, to disappoint them in their expected Associations, and to make all their strength to become as* Tow that hath smelt the fire, *hath been his work alone,* who takes to himself his great Power, *to carry on the Interest of his Kingdom against all Opposers. Under the* shadow *of this mercy, composed of as many* Branches *of Wisdom, Power, Goodnesse, and Faithfulnesse as any outward Dispensation hath brought forth since the name of* Christian was known, *do you now sit in Council, and the Residue of the Nation in Peace? What Obligations from the Lord? What Cords of love are upon us? The Returnall and Improvement of all his dealings with us, which he requireth and expecteth from us, I have pointed unto you in the following Sermon. For the present, I shall onely adde, that as whatever there hath been, of Beauty, Glory, or Advantage unto the people of God, in the late Transactions, hath been eminently of undeserved Grace; so the dreadfull Vengeance which the Lord hath executed against the men of his Enmity and Warfare, hath been most righteously procured, by their cloathing cursed Designs of Revenge, Persecution, Bondage in Soul and Body, Spoyle and Rapines, with the most glorious pretences of Zeal, Covenant, Reformation, and such like things, which never came into their hearts Therefore that the God of all our Mercies and Deliverances would for ever keep alive in your Hearts a faithfull Acknowledgement of his Grace, and a Practicall detestation of those wayes which are such a Provocation to the Eyes of his Glory, shall be the constant Prayer of*

From my
Study *Ch.*
Ch Oxon,
Nov. 7.

Your most humble Servant
in our deareſt Lord,
JOHN OWEN.

Ezek. 17. v. 24. *And all the trees of the field ſhal know, that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and have exalted the low tree; have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flouriſh. I the Lord have ſpoken it, & have done it*

Although all the works of Gods providence (which are *great, and ſought out of all that have pleaſure in them*) have ſuch a ſtamp and impreſſion of his own *Image* on them, his *wiſdome, goodneſs, power, love*, that they declare their Author, and *reveal from heaven* his kindneſs and wrath towards the children of men, yet ſuch are the prejudices, luſts, inordinacy of affections and *intereſts* of many, that it hath always been a long and difficult task to convince them of his *preſence* in them, when it hath been moſt uncontrollably evident.

The *Egyptians* will wreſtle with many a plague, by thinking the *Magicians can do ſo*; and the *Philiſtims* will try to the utmoſt, whether it be his hand, or *a chance that is hapned to them*. *Lord*, (ſaith the Prophet) *When thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee*, Iſa. 16. v. 11.

Yea oftentimes (eſpecially when *judiciall blindneſs* is gone forth upon them) though they cannot but ſee his *Arm awaked as of old*, and made *bare*, they will not reſt in his Soveraign diſpoſal of things, but riſe up againſt the works of his revenge and holineſs; like wild beaſts that are purſued, when all ways of eſcape and turning are ſhut up, they flie in the face of him that follows them, *they repent not of their evil deeds, but bite their tongues for anger, and blaſpheme the God of heaven*, Revel. 16. verſ. 10. 11.

Yea, ſuch is the power of *deceivable luſts*, that many will admire at the blindnes of others in former generations, who conſidered not the works of God, (as the Jews in the wilderneſs) when themſelves are under actuall contempt of no leſs glorious diſpenſations: like the *Phariſees*, who bewailed the folly of *their fathers in perſecuting the Prophets*, when themſelves were endeavouring *to kill the Son of GOD*, Matth. 23. 29. 30.

To bring then upon the ſpirits of men a *conviction* of the works of God, and his righteouſneſs therein, ſo as to prevail with them to reſt in his determination of things, is a task meet only for him, who knows all their hearts within them, and can carry on the iſſues of his providence, untill to *a man they ſhall ſay, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God who judgeth in the earth*, Pſal. 58. 11. and this is that which the Lord here undertakes to accompliſh. *And*, ſaith he, *all the trees*, &c.

In the preaching and propheſying of *Ezekiel*, this one thing among others is eminent, that he was *Artifex parabolarum*, a wonderfull framer of *Similitudes and Parables*, a way of teaching attended with much evidence, cleerneſs and power.

In particular, he frequently compares the World to a *Field*, or a *Forrest*; and the *Inhabitants* of it, to the *Trees* therein: An alluſion exceedingly proper, conſidering the great variety and difference of condition both of the one and the other. The *trees of the field*, are ſome *high*, ſome *low*, ſome *green*, ſome *dry*, ſome *ſtrong*, ſome *weak*, ſome *loftie*, ſome *contemptible*, ſome *fruitfui*, ſome *barren*, ſome *uſefui*, ſome altogether *uſeleſs*; ſo that you have all ſorts of perſons, high and low, of what condition, relation, or intereſt ſoever, clearly repreſented by the trees of the field: and theſe are the trees in my Text.

This Chap. unto v. 22. is taken up in a *Riddle*, a *Parable*, with the expoſition of it. The time being come, that God would deſtroy the outward viſible Monarchy of the *Jews*, for their falſe worſhip, tyranny, perſecution and oppreſſion, he employes the *King of Babylon* in that work, who ſubdues the Nation, takes away two Kings one after another, and appoints *Zedekiah* a titulary Governor under him: but the wrath of God being to come upon them to the uttermoſt, he alſo cloſes with *Egypt*, rebels againſt him by whoſe *appointment alone* he had any right to be a Ruler, *v.* 16. ſo way is made by his ruine, to put an end to the Kingly reign of the houſe of *David* in *Jeruſalem*, Jer. 29. 16, 17.

The Lord had of old erected *a Kingly Government* in the houſe of *David*, not for any eminency in the Government it ſelf, or for the civill advantage of that people; for he had long before choſen & eſtabliſhed another conſiſting of 70. *Elders of the people*, Num 11. 24. to whom he added *Prophets* & *Iudges* extraordinarily raiſed up in ſeverall generations, according to his promiſe, *Deut.* 18. 18. which when the people rejected, he ſaid, *they rejected him*, or his inſtitution, 1. *Sam.* 8. 7. but that it might be a *Type* of the ſpirituall Dominion of their *Meſsiah*, and ſo was a part of their *Pædagogie* and bondage, as were the reſidue of their Types every one of them: yea, the moſt glorious enjoyments whatſoever, which were granted them, which did yet repreſent ſomething that was afterwards to be brought in, was part of that ſervile eſtate wherein God kept that people, that without us they ſhould not be made perfect. But now this carnall people beholding the outward beauty, luſtre, and glory of the Type, they began to reſt in it, to the neglect of the ſpirituall Kingdom of Chriſt repreſented thereby. And thus did they with the reſt of their Types, untill the Lord deſtroyed all their outward pomp and glory, *Iſa.* 1. 11, 12. *Ier.* 7. 4, 14, 15.

So in particular dealt he with their *Kingly Government*, when once they began to account their *bondage* their *glory*, and to embrace the *ſhadow* in ſtead of the *ſubſtance*. And this did he, to recall them to a ſerious conſideration of the tendencie of all *Typical Inſtitutions*, and the deſigne he was carrying on concerning the Kingdom of Chriſt. Hence v. 22. of this Chap. he calls them from their thoughtfulneſs about the deſtructions, deſolations, and contentions that were amongſt them, in reference to their Civill Rule, to the conſideration of that deſigne which he was ſecretly and ſilently carrying on, under all theſe diſpenſations. *I will alſo take off the higheſt branch of the high cedar, and will ſet it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent.*

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In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing: in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. As if the Lord should say, There is a great noise in the world about setting up and plucking down of *Kings*, in this their carnal Rule; and many of you see nothing else, you will look no farther: but I also have my work in hand, my designe is not bounded within these limits and outward appearances: I am setting up a King that shall have another manner of Dominion and rule then these worms of the earth: *He shal stand*, as *Micah* 5.4. The setting up then of the Kingdom of Christ, *who is the highest branch of the high Cedar*, and planting it in the Church, the *Mountain of Israel*, with the prosperity thereof, and safetie of him that shall dwell therein, is the subject of verse 22. chap. 23.

This being *that*, to the consideration whereof God here calls his people in such a season, I shall name one or two Observations from this connexion of the words.

Obser. 1. *In the midst of all the tumults and embroilments of the Nations, that which the Lord takes peculiarly as his own designe, into his own management, is the carrying on of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus.* You are about your work, (saith the Lord) I also am about mine: you have your *branches and Cedars*, I also have one to plant, that shall flourish.

Dan. 2.44. *In the dayes of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom that shall never be destroyed*, &c. Were not those Kings and Kingdoms also of his setting up, that it is said *in their dayes* he shal set up one of his own? Yea doubtless, *He changeth the times and the seasons, he setteth up kings, and removeth kings* Dan. 2.21. *He rules in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will*, Chap. 4.25. There is not a persecuting *Pharaoh*, but *he raises him up for his own purpose*, Exod. 9.16. But yet in respect of the Kingdom of his Son, he speaks of them as if he had nothing to do with them, *In their dayes*, I will do my own work, advance the Kingdom of the Lord Christ.

There are great and mighty works in hand in this Nation: Tyrants are punished, the jaws of Oppressors are broken, bloody revengeful persecutors disappointed, and, we hope, Governors set up, *that may be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord, that may be as the light of the morning* &c, 2. *Sam.* 23.3,4. The hand of the Lord hath been wonderfully exalted in all these things: But yet should we rest in them, should they not be brought into an immediate subserviencie to the Kingdome of the Lord Jesus, the Lord will quickly distinguish between them and his own peculiar design, and say, *In the dayes of these changes*, I will do so and so, speak of them as if he had nothing to do with them. The carrying on of the interest of Christ, is his peculiar aim; he of his goodnes make it ours also..

Obs. 2. *Among all the designes that are on foot in the world, there is none hath either stability, fixednes, or final success, but onely the designe of God concerning the Kingdom of Christ.* Other branches may be set, but the Branch of the Lord onely prospers. The likelieſt appearance of other undertakings, are but as the glo-

rious rising of the sun in the morning quickly clouded. The interest of Christ is like *Joseph*, *Gen.* 49.23,24. oft-times the *archers* shoot at it, and *grieve it*; but in the close, the bow the eof abides in strength: and therefore this is the issue of all these dispensations, *That the Kingdoms and Nations are at length to be possessed by the Lord Christ*: his sheaf standing up, and all others bowing thereunto. And unto the consideration of these things, in the midst of all the tumults in the world, doth God effectually recal his people, and withall tells them how he wil carry it on, in the words of my text, *And all the trees*, &c. In the words three things are to be observed

1. *The work that God ascribes to himself*, and that he sets down under a two-fold similitude:

1. *Of pulling down the high tree, and setting up the low tree.*

2. *Of drying up the green tree, and making the dry tree to flourish.*

And both these similitudes are coincident, serving onely in this redoubling, for the clearer illustration of that which they shaddow out.

2. *There is the issue that God will carry this out unto, in respect of others.* All the trees of the field shall know.

3. *A particular assurance that the Lord gives for the accomplishment of all this, from the engagement of his Name.* I the Lord, &c.

For the first, the expression of the work of the Lord, may be taken two wayes: 1. *Strictly* and *properly*. 2. *Largely*, and by the way of *analogie* and proportion.

In the first way, you may consider,

1. The *tree* that is to be cast down and withered; and that is the *high tree*, and the *green tree*. A *tree* that in their eyes had both beauty and vigour, high and green: This was the *Judaicall Kingdom*, admired and delighted in by the Jews: this, sayes God, I will reject; as also he will many a tall *Eliab*, that even some *Samuels* may think to be his Anointed.

2. The *tree* that is to be exalted, and made to flourish; and that is the *low tree* the dry tree, contemptible for growth; it is *low*, useless for fruit; it is *dry*. And this is the spirituall Kingdom of the *Messiah*, contemned, despised: This, sayes God, I will exalt, carry on, and make glorious. For though the interest of Christ and the Gospel may seem low and dry for a season, in comparison of the glory of other flourishing interests; yet, in the issue, it shall be exalted above them all.

2. As taken more *largely*, and by the way of *Analogie*; and so the *high* and the *green tree* are the things of the most glorious appearance in the world, persons and states that seem to be exceedingly suted for the work that God hath to do; that are in the greatest probability to be eminently instrumentall in his hand. But alas, sayes God, these I will pull down, and cause to wither. Perhaps you will think it strange, that a mighty Monarchy, a triumphing Prelacie, a thriving Conformity, should all be brought down: but so it shall be: *Every mountain shall be made a plain.*

2. The *low tree*, and the *dry tree*, are things, persons, Assemblies, outwardly weak and contemptible, such as wise men do verily believe that God will never use

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they will not understand that such *Moseses* shall be deliverers; but cry, Who made them Judges and Rulers? But even these will God exalt, and cause to flourish: *Every valley shall be exalted.*

Two Observations flow hence, which I shall insist upon.

1. *In the carrying on of the interest of Christ and the Gospel, God will work wonderfull providential alterations.*

2. *The actings of Gods providence, in carrying on the interest of Christ, shall be exceedingly unsuted to the Reasonings and Expectations, of the most of the sons of men.*

Some trees must be pluck'd down, and some raised up; yea, high trees thrown down, and the low caused to flourish.

2. There is the *issue* of Gods thus dealing in respect of others, *All the trees of the field*, &c. By *the trees of the field* are meant men of all sorts that are concerned in these transactions: and herein you may observe two things.

1. Something *intimated*; and that is, an unwillingnesse in men to own these dispensations of God. Hence the Lord undertakes himself to set on a conviction upon them, as a thing of great difficulty.

2. Something *expressed*; which is the conviction it self that shall in the issue fall upon them, notwithstanding all their reluctancie. Hence also are these two Observations.

1. *Men are exceeding unwilling to see and own the hand of God, in those works of his providence which answer not their reasonings, interests, and expectations.*

2 *The Lord will not cease walking contrary to the carnal reasonings of men, in his mighty works for the carrying on the interest of the Lord Jesus, untill his hand be seen, owned, and confessed.*

For what remains concerning the *assurance* of the accomplishment of all this, from the *engagement of his Name*, I shall onely adde.

That the power and faithfulnesse of God are ingaged in the carrying on the things of the Kingdom of Christ, to the conviction of the most stubborn opposers.

I begin with the first.

In the carrying on the interest of Christ and the Gospel, God will work wonderfull providentiall alterations: Alterations among the trees of the field, Nations, States, and Men on the earth.

When the beginning of the Saints departure from under the dominion of Antichrist, was followed with wars, tumults, and destructions; it was objected to *Luther* that that doctrine could not be of God, which was attended with such desolations. He replyed, according to the vigour of his spirit, *Ego nisi tumultus istos viderem Christum in mundo esse non crederem*: Did he not see those tumults, he would not believe that Christ was come forth into the world.

The Lord tells you how he will bring on his Kingdom, *Hag.* 2.6,7. *I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come*, &c. The *desire of the nations*, is

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to be brought in by the *shaking of the nations*. They are to be *civilly* moved, that they may be *spiritually* estabilished. Neither are they onely to be shaken, but also to undergo great alterations in their shakings, *Heb.* 12.27. *This Word yet once more signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.* They must have a removall as well as a shaking, μετάθεσιν a change, a translation,. Most Nations, in their civil Constitution, lye out of order for the bringing in of the interest of Christ: they must be shaken up, and new disposed of, that all obstacles may be taken away. The day of the Gospel is not onely terrible in its *discovering light*, and as it is a *trying furnace*, Mal. 3. 2. but also in its *devouring fury*, as it is a *consuming oven*, Chap. 4. 1.

There are three principall seasons of the Lords eminent appearance to carry on the Kingdom of Christ and the Gospel, and all attended with dreadfull *proviaentiall alterations*: and unto one of these Heads may all particular actings be reduced.

1. The first is, the promulgation of the Gospel among the Jews, by the Lord Christ himself and his Appostles. What this was attended with all, is graphically described, *Matth.* 24.6,7. *And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of Wars: for Nation shall rise against Nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.* And the close of it you have, *vers.* 29. *Immediatly after the tribulation of those dayes, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.* The Judaicall State, in all the height and glory of it, was utterly consumed; so that *all flesh*, all the Jews, were in danger of utter destruction, *v.* 22. Their own Historian himself a Jew, affirming, that from the foundation of the world, never was there such destruction, and desolation brought upon any Nation. Which words of his, are a Coment on that prediction of our Saviour, *Matth.* 24. 21. And the reason of this eminent desolation you have, *Isa.* 9. 5, 6.

2. The second is, in the further carrying on of the Gospel after the destruction of *Ierusalem*, throwout the world of the Gentiles, subject then in a great proportion to the Romane Empire. And what is the issue hereof? The opening of the six Seals immediatly follows thereon, *Rev.* 6. which (after manifold and various alterations) end in that dreadfull dissolution of the Pagan Empire, which you have described, from *v.* 14. to the end.

3. The most signal is the comming of the Lord Christ, to recover his people from Antichristian idolatry and oppression; which, of all others, is and shall be attended with the most astonishing alterations and desolations, pulling down of high trees, and exalting them that are low. Thence is that war, described, *Rev.* 17. 14. and that mighty vengeance poured out by the Lord Christ on the Nations, their Kings and Captains, Chap. 19. v. 11. to the end, which the holy Ghost describes by a colection of all the most dreadfull expressions which are any where used to set out great devastations in the Old Testament.

And

And this is the head whereunto the preſent *actings of providence* in this Nation are to be referred, they all tend to the accompliſhment of his main deſigne therein. He that thinks *Babylon* is confined to *Rome*, and its open Idolatry, knows nothing of *Babylon*, nor of the *New Ieruſalem*: The depth of a ſubtile Myſtery, doth not lye in groſſe viſible Folly: It hath been inſinuating it ſelf into all the Nations for 1600. years, and to moſt of them is now become as the marrow in their bones: before it be wholly ſhaken out, theſe heavens muſt be diſſolved, and the earth ſhaken; their tall trees hewed down, and ſet a howling, *Rev.* 18. and the reſidue of them tranſplanted from one end of the earth to another.

This, I ſay, then is the work that the Lord hath now in hand; And this is a day of thankfulneſſe in referrence to what he hath done for us in this Nation. I know no better way of praiſing God for any work, then the finding out of his deſigne therein, and cloſing with him in it. God hath gone with you (I hope) now to the end of your work; leave him not untill he comes to the end of his. He hath compelled you *to go with him one mile* for your own good; go with him two for his glory. The two Tribes and an half ſate not down in their own poſſeſſions, untill the whole work of the Lord was done. I ſpeak not with reſpect to any ingagements of war with Foraign Nations; what have I to do with things that are above me? You will finde work enough for your zeal to the Kingdom of Chriſt at home: and this is the work of thankfulneſſe which you are called unto.

Now the reaſons of this are,

Reaſ. 1. Becauſe amongſt all men, where the *Kingdom of Chriſt* is to be ſet up there is ſomething or other poſſeſſed, that he alone muſt and will have; and therefore the Lord, giving Jeſus Chriſt but his *own inheritance*, it muſt needs be attended with great *alterations*. I dare ſay, untill of late (whatever now is) there was not any State or Nation in the World, where the Name of Chriſt is known, but that there was an intrenchment upon that which is the pure portion and inheritance of the Lord Chriſt, and that detained with falſhood and force. Yea, ſuch is the *folly* & *blindneſs* of the moſt of men, that they think their greateſt intereſt lies, in holding that faſt, which Chriſt will take from them; *Pharoah*-like, that thought it the great advantage of his Kingdom, not to let the people go, when it proved the ruine of him and his Land. This I dare ſay will in the iſſue be the ruine of all, or moſt of the tall trees of *Europe*; they have graſped much of the power of Chriſt, and endeavour to impoſe on the conſciences of his in the worſhip of God, or otherwiſe oppreſſe them in what he hath purchaſed for them; and, by a dreadfull miſtake, they ſuppoſe their own intereſt lies therein, which makes them hold faſt, untill Chriſt hath ſhaken them all to pieces, and taken away even that alſo which was their own. The late King had learned a ſaying from his Predeceſſor, *No Biſhop, no King*. Hence he ſuppoſes his main intereſt to lie in holding faſt *Prelacy*; whatever he ſeems to part withall, that he will not let go, that is his main intereſt. And what is this *Prelacy*? a meer *Antichriſtian encroachment* upon the inheritance of Chriſt. Chriſt coming to take his owne, ſhakes the other to pieces. Thoſe who

would have been our Oppressors in *Scotland*, but that God hath crushed the Cockatrice in the shell, and filled the pit with their dead bodies, which they had digged for us, they also had prepared a *Procrustes bed*, a heavie yoke, a *beast* that had it grown to perfection, would have had *horns* and *hoofs*, and in maintaing this, they think their great interest to lie.

And in holding this fast, are they after all their Associations broken in pieces, and this is one cause.

Reas. 2. The works that God hath to do in such a season, require it; God hath three great works to doe, in the day of his carrying on the interest of Christ and the Gospel.

1 *He hath great revenges to take.*

2 *He hath great deliverances to work.*

3 *He hath great discoveries to make.* I shall but touch on each.

1 *He hath great revenges to take*, and that on three sorts of Persons.

1 *On oppressing Babylonians*; false worshippers and persecutors: Whilest the *Bride* is preparing for the Lord Christ, he goes forth *with the Armies of Heaven following him* to take vengeance on these his enemies, *Rev.* 19. 11. These are the *Absoloms*, the usurpers of his throne, the *Hamans*, the forcers of his spouse, the chiefest adversaries of his Kingdom: *He shall fill places with dead bodies* of these, and upon this account, *wound the heads over many Countries*, Psal. 110. 6. The Axe is laid to the root of many a *tall Tree* on this score, even in this Nation, where he is reckoning for blood, and imposition of yokes; and he hath found out men, inheriting this spirit from one generation to another.

Isai. 43. 14. *Ier.* 25. 12. *chap.* 51. 35. *Rev.* 16. 19.

2 *Scoffing Edomites*, there is a twofold quarrel that God hath with that generation of men.

1 *Their rejoycing at Sions distress, and desiring its encrease*, Psal. 157. 6.

2 Their endeavour to destroy the residue, when at any time streightned, *Obed.* 14. How many in the late tryall, rejoyced in the straights *of Sion*? That fate expecting our destruction, that they might have risen to stand in the *cross wayes* to have cut off them that escaped: wherewith should they have reconciled themselves to their master, but with the Heads of the servants of Christ? God hath vengeance in such a day as this for *Edom* also.

3 *Luke-warm Laodiceans*, neutralists, that *drink Wine in bowls*, and are no way moved at the suffering of *Ioseph*. *Gallio's*, that care for none of these things, there is not a generation in the World, with whom the Lord is more provoked, then with this *Meroz*-generation: when God is jealous for Sion, he *is displeased with them that are at ease*, Zach. 1. 14, 15. Now considering how many persons of all these sorts are fixed in the Nation, and you will see that vengeance cannot be taken on them without great alterations.

2 *He hath deliverances to work*: It is the time of *visiting the Prisoners of hope*: the prey must be taken out of the *Iawes of the terrible*: every *staff of the oppressor*

broken

broken in pieces; yea, he delivers his Saints, not onely from all that they have suffered, but from all that was in the contrivance of their enemies to bring upon them, which is greater then they can execute; and this will cost something before the *Pharaohs* of the Nation, will let his people go.

3 *He hath great Trials to make.*

1 *Of his own, that they may be purged.*

2 *Of hypocrites, that they may be discovered.*

1 The day of carrying on the interest of Christ is a day of purifying and purging. *Dan.* 12. 10. *Many shall be purifyed, and made white, and tryed.* That is a day like a *furnace*, Mal. 3. 3. That wil consume drosse and Tin. The remainder of the *people must be brought through the fire*, Zach. 13. 9. *Zach.* 3. 3. *Joshua's Garments* are defiled by dwelling in *Babylon*, many of Christs own have contracted rust and soyl, have got carnall interests and ingagements that must be scowred from them.

2 Of the discovery of Hypocrites, it is emphatically said of the saints, that they *follow the Lamb whersoever he goes*: All sorts of Professors wil follow him in *some paths*, in such as are consistent with their Power, Do- *Revel.* 14. 4. minion, and Advantages, they are even ready to run before him: but *John* 6. 26. he hath some paths that are unpleasing to flesh and blood, paths that he gives no *loaves* in; here men that sayes they are *Iews and are not, but lye*, give quite out from him. Now upon all these severall accounts, must that day of the Gospel, of necessity be attended with great *providential alteration.*

Vse. 1. To discover where dwells that spirit which actuates all the *great Alterations* that have been in these nations. Such things have been brought to pas as have filled the World with amazement. A *Monarchy* of some hundred yeers continuance, always affecting, and at length wholly degenerated into tyranny; destroyed, pulled down, swallowed up, a great and mighty *Potentate* that had cauled *Terror in the Land of the living, and laid his sword under his head*, brought to punishment for blood. *Hypocrites* & selfish men abundantly discovered. *Wise men* made fools, and the strong as water. A *Nation* (that of *Scotland*) engaging for and against the same cause backward and forward, twice or thrice, always seeking where to finde their own gain & interest in it, at length totally broken, in opposition to that cause, wherewith at first they closed; multitudes of *Professors*, one year praying, fasting, nightily rejoycing upon the least successe, bearing it out as a signe of the presence of God, another yeer whilst the same work is carried on, *Cursing, Repining*, slighting the marvelous *appearance of God* in answer unto prayers and most solemn appeals, being very angry at the deliverances of Sion; on the other side, all the mighty successes that God hath followed poor despised ones withall, being with them as with those in dayes of old, *Heb.* 11. 31. *Who through faith subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousnes, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of Lyons, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the Sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the Aliens.* He I say that shall consi-

der all this, may wel enquire after that principle, which being regularly carried on, yet meeting with the corruption and lusts of men, should so wheel them about, and work so many mighty alterations. Now what is this, but the most effectual design of the Lord, to carry on the interest of Christ and the Gospel, whatever stands in the way. This bears down all before it, wraps up some in blood, some in hardness, and is most eminently straight and holy in all these transactions. *Isa.* 14. 32. *What shall one then answer the messengers of the Nation? That the Lord hath founded Sion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.*

Use. 2 To magnifie the goodnesse of God, who unto us hath sweetned and seasoned all his dreadfull dispensations, and all the alterations in those Nations, with this his gracious designe running through them all: this is that which puts all their beauty and luster on them, being outwardly dreadfull and horrible. The carrying on of this (which is hidden from the men of the world, who have therefore no joy) is the onely thing we have to rejoyce in this day; our Victories have no glory, but what they receive from hence: *Isa.* 4. 2. That bloud which is an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord, is the bloud of the enemies of this designe of his: the vengeance that is to be delighted in, is the *vengeance of the Temple*: Heaven and all that is in it, is called to rejoyce when *Babylon is destroyed with violence and fury*, *Rom.* 20. 21. when those who would not have the King of Saints reigne, are brought forth and slain before his face; and in this God makes distinguishing work, and calls to rejoycing; *Isa.* 65. 13, 14. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, My servants shall eat but ye shall be hungry, my servants shall drink but ye shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall rejoyce, but ye shall be ashamed; behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shal cry for sorrow of heart, and shal houle for vexation of spirit.*

Thus the Saints are called to sing the *song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb*, *Rev.* 15. 3. The deliverance by *Moses* was a temporall deliverance from outward yokes and bondage; the deliverance of the *Lamb* was a spirituall deliverance, from spirituall bondage; the deliverance that God will give his Saints from this oppression, shall be mixed; as their bondage partakes of both, so shall their deliverance be; and therefore they shall *sing the song of Moses and the Lamb*; If ever any persons in the world had cause to sing *the song of Moses & the Lamb*, we have this day; the bondage prepared for us, was both in spirituals & temporals; about a Tyrant full of revenge, and a discipline full of persecution, hath been our contest; whether the yoke of one and the other, should by the sword & violence be put upon our necks & consciences, is our controversie. There was both *Egypt* and *Babel* in the bondage prepared, and both these enraged; *Pharaoh* doubled the task of the *Israelites* when they did but speak of liberty; what would he have done had he recovered them under his hand after they were escaped? What would the thoughts of that man of bloud have been and his wayes, had he prevailed after so many provocations? *Cede ac sanguine quisquis ab exilio.* And what would their ways have been, who thought to sit on his *right hand and his left in his kingdom*; but of this afterward. Now God having broken both the one snare and the other,

surely

ſurely we have cauſe to ſing *the ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb this day*, when others are in the condition mentioned, *Iſa.* 8.21,22.

It is true, all things are not clear to all perhaps, that ſerve the Lord; ſome cannot rejoyce in the works of our God, but they are not *the firſt* on whom that ſin hath beeen charged; nothing more frequent in the Scripture, then the laying this ſin at the door of profeſſors, *that they ſet not their hearts to the works of the Lord* if they are of the *Armies in Heaven* they wil at length learn to follow the Lamb; and for the preſent, muſick with ſome diſcords, may make melody for the Lord. The ſong of *Deborah* is full of complaint; Diviſion of *Ruben*; *Gilead*, *Dan*, and *Aſhur*, ſlow in their helps, *Meroz* wholly neutrall: though we have all theſe ſorts, yet may we make a ſong to the Lord, that in Jeſus Chriſt may be acceptable this day.

Iſ. 43. 18. *Pſ.* 48.42, 43, 44. *Iud.* 5. 15 17, 23.

And the Lord I hope, will open the eyes of them amongſt us, and give them to cry for mercy when his righteous judgments have driven them from all their holds. When the mighty Army was deſtroyed in the *North* about three years ago, many would ſee nothing in it, bnt that they had not the bleſſing of the Church; hence they began to think of it as *Balack* did of *Baalam*, *whom he bleſſed, they were bleſſed, and whom he curſed they were curſed.* God could not bear the robbing him of his glory, and giving it unto ſelfiſh men; they ſhall bleſſe and bleſſe again, and be no more heard then the *Baaliſts cry*; even to the Lord ſhall they cry, but he will not regard them: the Lord I ſay will drive them from ſuch holds as theſe, that they may acknowledge his hand. Let then the great work of the Lord be owned, be rejoyced in, for it will certainly bear down all that ſtand in the way of it. Neither is there the leaſt true conſolation in any of theſe alterations, but what ariſes from a cloſing with it. Come we to the ſecond Obſervation.

Obſ. 2. *The actings of Gods providence in carrying on the intereſt of Chriſt, are & ſhal be exceedingly unſuited to the reaſonings & expectations of the moſt of men*

He hath a glorious work here to be accompliſhed, of whom ſhould he now make uſe? ſurely the *high tree*, the *green tree* will be employed; if one be to be anointed in the family of *Jeſſe*, will it not be goodly *Eliab*? if the *King* will honour any, who ſhould it be but I, ſayes *Haman*? but all on the contrary; the *low dry tree* is taken, *David* from the flock, and *Mordecai* from the Gate, *the thoughts of God, are not as our thoughts*, neither doth he look on outward appearances.

To give ſome inſtances in his moſt ſignal actings in this Kinde.

Luke 3. 13. *Iohn* 1. 19, 20. *Acts* 1. 6. *Mat.* 20. 21, 22. *Mark* 13. 55. *Chap.* 8. 20. *Iohn* 4. 48, 49.

The Jews knew that God had a great work to do in giving of a *Meſſiah*, the Saviour of the world; they are raiſed up to expectation of it; upon every conſiderable appearance, they cry, *is this he*? and what withal did they expect? *outward glory, beauty, deliverance, carnall power and dominion*; God at length comes to do his work, and bringeth forth a poor man, that had not where to lay his head, followed by a few fiſhermen and ſimple women, that had *neither form nor comlineſſe that he ſhould be deſired*, perſecuted, deſpiſed, crucified,

Iſa.

Isa. 53. 2, 3. from the beginning to the end quite another thing then what they
Phil. 2. 7, 8. looked for; Thus layes he the foundation of the Gospel, in the person of his Son, by frustrating the expectations of the most of men; *The stone which the builders refused,* &c.

Again, seeing salvation is of the *Iews, the rod of Christs strength being to be sent out of Sion,* and that living waters were to flow forth from Jerusalem, the Gospel being from thence to be published through the world, who should the Lord chuse to do it? Surely the great, the wise, the learned of that Nation, the *High priests,*
Iohn 4. 22. *learned Scribes, devout Pharisees,* that might have won their mes-
Psa. 110. 2. sage, some repute and credit in the world; but contrary to all the wis-
Zach. 14. 8. dom of the flesh, he takes a few ignorant, weak, unlearned Fishermen,
Acts 4. 13. despised upon all accounts, and commits this great work unto them;
1 *Cor.* 1. 20. and accordingly out they go, friendlesse, helplesse, harborlesse, unto
26, 27, 28. their great employment. The like instruments for the most part did he employ to make an entrance upon the great work of casting down false-worship and Idolatry.

Moreover in that great work for the Lord Christ, which is to be accomplished in the ruine and destruction of *Babel,* when it must be done with might, power, and strength, with Armies, and bloud, wil not now the Lord use the *high and green trees?* Many Kings & Potentates having in profession embraced the doctrine of the Gospel; Nobles and Great ones having given up their names in appearance unto Christ; who but they shall now be used in this work of the Lord? But yet plainly the Lord tels them the contrary, *Rev.* 18. 9. all these persons bewail the judgements of God that are executed on *Babel,* which shall be done by *low dry Trees.*

To give one instance in the mighty works which God hath lately wrought in these Nations. *A work of Reformation* and carrying on the interest of Christ is here undertaken; what upon this are the thoughts of the most of men? whether were their eyes turned? *Tall trees, green Trees* are pitched on; this and that *great Lord* popular with the multitude; *Eliab* is in their eyes, they must do it; the *Scots* shal certainly effect it; the King shall be taken from his evil councel, he shall be active in it. *A Church Government* shall be set up, and no man suffered to live in the Nation that will not submit unto it. Some, like the sons of *Zebedee,* shal sit on the right and left hand of Christ, in the Kingdom they were setting up for him; these, and those *sound good men* shall be next the King, then all will be great and glorious indeed. What now I pray? do all things indeed suit and answer these expectations and reasonings of men? doth God accomplish the thoughts of their hearts? Alas, the *high Trees* rested on, proved for the most part *broken reeds that run into our hands,* and let out our blood in abundance to no purpose; the *Top bough* hoped for fallen as an *abominable branch,* the *Scots* shaken and broken with unparaleld destruction, in the maintainance of the interest & cause which at first they prosperously opposed; the *Iron yoke* pretended to be that of Christ (though it be fleshly, carnal, and cruell, suited to the wisdom of a man, and his rule be spiritual meek and gentle)

cast

caſt off and thrown away; *low Trees, dry Trees,* deſpiſed ones, contemned ones without form or comlineſſe exalted, uſed, employed, and the hand of the Lord evidently lifted up in all theſe Tranſactions.

Some Reaſons of this may be given, and the firſt is taken,

1. From the *corruptions of the hearts of men,* ſquaring the works of God to their fleſhly reaſonings, corrupt intereſts and principles; they are bold with the wiſdom of God, and conclude thus, and thus things ought to be, ordering their thoughts for the moſt part, according to their corrupt and carnall advantages: I ſhall inſtance both as to *carnall advantages* and *principles.*

1. Carnal power and glory ſeem excellent to the *Jews*; hence think they, when God gives us our *Meſſiah,* all this muſt be accompliſhed; their *Affections* are diſordered by corrupt luſts and deſires, and that enſlaves their *minds* to ſtrange apprehenſions; God comes in his own way, and how croſſe do things run to their expectations? What was the corrupt deſign of many in *Scotland*? that they might ſet up a *ſon of Tabeal in England,* and themſelves be great under him; that they and their partakers might impoſe on the reſidue of the Nation, eſpecially in the things of God; their great deſire that things ſhould be thus, corrupts their minds to think, that it ought to be ſo, and it ſhall be ſo; Hence, Ambition to rule, and to have all under their power, even in conſcience, is quickly miſtaken for zeal to the Kingdom of Chriſt, re-inthroning of Tyranny, is loyalty, and all *according to Covenant*; as if men had ſworn to be *good to themſelves*, and to bee *true to their own intereſt* all their days; which ſurely few need to be ſworn to. Thus mens minds and judgments are diſtempered by their luſts and intereſts, which makes them frame a way for God to proceed in, which when he doth not, how are they ſurpriſed!

2. For *Principles*; men take up *principles* that they wil adhere unto; wiſe principles forſooth, yea and very righteous too; all things what ever that fall out muſt be ſquared unto their *Principles* they expect that nothing muſt be done, but what ſuits unto them; and if any thing contrary be wrought, even of God himſelf, how deceived, how diſappointed are they.

The moſt tremendous judgement of God in this world, is the hardning of the hearts of men; this ſeals them up for the moſt part to deſtruction: A thing it is often mentioned in the Scripture, & many ſubtile diſputes there are, how it ſhould come forth from him who is *moſt holy*, ſeeing it is the greateſt ſin of the creature? I ſhall give you my thoughts in a moſt eminent inſtance or two, as to one particular of it.

1. Look on *Pharaoh*, of whom it is moſt ſignally ſpoken, that God hardned his heart; how did the Lord accompliſh this? *Pharaoh* ſettles himſelf upon as *righteous Principles* as ever any of the ſons of men could do; one is, *That it belongs to the chief Ruler of a Nation to ſee to the profit and glory of the Nation.* What more righteous principle is there in the world? You that talk of your principles, give me one more righteous then this. Hence he concludes, that if it be incumbent on him to ſee that the Realm receive no detriment, he muſt not let the people go, by whom they received ſo many great advantages: God confirms his heart in theſe principles,

ples, which are *good in themselves*, but abominable when taken up against the mind and providence of God; hence he and his perished in their principles acting against the appearance of God.

2. It is also said of *Sihon* the King of the *Amorites*, *that his heart was hardned that he would not let the people go torough his land*; How I pray? Even by adhering to that wise principle, that *it is not meet to let a potent enemy into the bowels of a people*; and this made way for his ruine.

Thus it is with many; they fix on principles, good in generall, and in their season: old bounds must not be broken up, order must not be disturbed: Let God appear never so eminently, so mightily, they wil keep to their Princciple; what is this but *Judiciall hardnes*? And this I say is one reason why the actings of God in such a *Day* as this, are so unsuited to the expectations of men; they square his works to the Interests and Principles, wh ch it will not answer.

2. God chuseth thus to do things above and besides the expectations of men, that his *Presence*, and the *Presence* of the *Lord* Christ may be the more conspicuous in the World. Did the Lord alwayes walk in paths that men had *rationally* that is *foolishly* (for such is our wisdom in the wayes of God) alot to him, the appearances of his glory would be exceedingly ecclipsed. It is hard for men to have a clear and naked view of the power of God in effecting any thing, when there is great help of means to do it; but it is much harder to discern the wisdom of God in an affair, when mens own wisedom and designing is all accompl shed. But now, when the way of God is like the *Way of an Eagle in the Aire*, *when his paths are in the deep, and his footsteps are not known:* then is he glorious in his goings. Men think all things would be very glorious, if they might be done acco ding to their minde. perhaps indeed they would, but with their glory, not the glory of God.

God will do it for the h rdning of many false empty Professors and others in the world, that the judgements appointed may come upon them to the uttermost. The hardning of men to their destruction, being a close and inward work, is one of the most eminent acts of the providence of God in governing the world: By this, he accomplisheth most of the judgements that he hath threatned. Now there is not any Dispensation of God towards man, bnt he can, and doth sometimes cause it to be so managed and ordered, that it shall be a way and means of hardning such as he hath appointed thereunto. Some are hardned by the word, some by mercies, some by judgements. Among other wayes that he useth for this purpose, this is one, the dispotal of the works of his providence, contrary to the reasonings of men, doing things unlikely and unfitly in the eyes of flesh and bloud; that so they may despise those wayes of his, and be broken in opposition unto them. Take an instance in *Pharaohs* last hardning for destruction; when he brought the people out of *Egypt*, he did not lead them the direct way into *Canaan*, but carries them into the Wildernesse, and shuts them up between the mountains and the sea; *Pharaoh* justly concludes, that they

are

are entangled beyond escape, and that he shall surely overtake them and destroy them; this drawes him out to his ruine: had God led them in the straight path, probably he had not pursued after them; but the Lord layes this as a plot for his destruction. God will harden *Ieroboam*, and therefore a Lyon shall slay the Prophet that reached against his Idolatry. So was it with the *Iews*, they expect all glory to attend the comming of the *Messiah*, and after the comming of him indeed, God follows them with judgments to a total desolation; which being so unsuited unto the dispensation they expected, *hardnesse thereby is come upon them* to the uttermost. *Tertullian* sayes, he dare say, That the *Scriptures were on purpose framed in many things, to give occasion to proud and curious unhumbled wits to stumble and fall.* And I dare say, that the Lord doth order many of his works in the world, in *Wayes past finding out*, on purpose to give occasion to many to stumble and fall. God fulfilleth many mighty works, that could not otherwise be brought about, by hardning the hearts of men. The hardning of the late *Kings* heart was an engine whereby he wrought mighty things and alterations: had not God laid obduratenesse and stubbornesse upon his spirit, we had long since in all probability been ruined. To accomplish this end then, God will so order the work of his providence, that men shall reason themselves into unreasonable and brutish hardnesse and stupidity. Thus hath God done in the dayes wherein we live; his mighty acts that he hath wrought, both for the matter of the things done, and the manner of their doing, have been so contrary to mens *principles, Interests, Expectations*, and *Reasons*, that they have slighted them to such a degree of hardning, that they seem to have no reason left at all; and when it comes to that, God will fall judicially upon the very faculties of their souls; he will blinde their eyes, deprive them of their judgement and insight into things, that they shall be as incapable of Gods mindes as fools, and give them up to *vile affections, to do the things that are not seemly*, as it hath fallen out with too many amongst us. Let us now make some use of this point. It serves then,

1. To discover the vanity of those men, who because the works of God have not been carried on in wayes *sutable to their Reasonings and Expectations*, do utterly reject them, disown them, and oppose *him* in them. Can these men give any one instance, of any *one eminent Work* of God, that he hath brought about by such wayes and means, as men would rationally alot thereunto? especially in things that are in immediate subserviency to the Kingdom of the Lord Christ? Can they instance that they have been so managed? nay, hath not this been a means to *harden multitudes to their destruction*, that have limited the *Holy One*, and chalked out paths for him to walk in? I cannot but fear that it was a great provocation of *the eyes of Gods Glory* that at the beginning and in the carrying on of the great alterations that have been wrought by his providence among us, we did speak of confirming and continuing under any condition whatsoever, any things or persons which it was in his design to evert; We must be promising to keep up the *high tree*, and to keep down the *low tree*, which was not at all in his thoughts, neither ever came it into

his heart. I hope he hath taught us, though with thorns, to follow him sometimes like *Abraham, not knowing whither we go.* Now the Lord convince them who are yet under this darkness; that think the wayes of God not equall, because not measured by their line; that bring their crooked rules unto that which is really strait, and cast it away as abominable. The children of *Israel* had got a proverb against the wayes of God; it was so taken for granted, that the wayes of his providence were not right and strait, that it was grown into a common by-word: a little discovery of the pride and hypocrisie of their own hearts undeceived them at last.

I shall not say to our Brethren, that they have shewed this day, that if *Absolom* had lived, and all we had been slain, it would have been well, leasing to them: but this I shall say, that it is a sad signe, that our wayes please not God, when his wayes please not us at all.

There being not space for the handling of the remaining propositions, I shall go forth to one generall use, and so conclude.

Now this I shall take from that of the Prophet *Amos*, 4.12. the generality of the people being exercised with various judgements, the residue of them are said to be saved *as a firebrand out of the burning*; that is, powerfully, effectually, from a very terrible, and a very neer destruction. After all the Lords great dispensations of providence, in carrying on his own design, this being *the condition of the people of this Nation*, many being destroyed by fore-going judgements, and the residue now saved like a fire-brand out of the burning, God having given us this issue of his mighty works, in pulling down the high tree, and exalting the low tree, it cannot but be our wisdom to close with the counsell which God gives in such a condition; and that you have, I say, *Amos* 4.12. *Because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.* Seeing that all this is done, *Prepare to meet thy God, O England; Prepare to meet thy God, O Parliament; Prepare to meet thy God, O Army*: To lead you a little towards the performance of this duty, it being that, and that alone, which is incumbent on you, I shall shew you these two things:

1. *What it is wherein we are to meet our God.*
2. *How we must meet him therein.*

For the first, there are three ways wherein we must meet the Lord, if we desire to answer his mind in any of these dispensations.

1. *In the way of his Providence.*
2. *In the way of his Worship.*
3. *In the way of his Holiness.*

First, The eminent ways, or the Providence of God in these days, may be referred unto three heads:

1. *His generall design, to pull down all those high oppositions to the Kingdom of his Son, which I have mentioned.*

2. *His peculiar aym to stain the glory of all flesh; to pull down high trees, that no flesh may glory.*

3. *His shaking of all endearments and injoyments here below, that the hearts of his may be fixed only on the things that cannot be shaken.*

And

And these upon all accompts and considerations whatever, appear to be the main tendencies of the actings of Providence in these our dayes.

Secondly, *There is the way of his Worship*, wherein also he will be met: It is most remote from my thoughts, to enter into contests concerning that peculiar way of *Gospel Worship*, which Christ hath appointed. It sufficeth me, that seeing God hath promised that in these dayes he will have his *Tabernacle with men*; and that *barrennes and drought shal be on every soul that comes not up to his feast of Tabernacles*, it is bottom sufficient, to press men to meet him in that way, according as he shall graciously make out light into them.

3. *There is the way of his Holiness*; as he is *holy*, so are all his wayes *holy*, so he will be met and walked with, in all wayes of holiness and obedience to Jesus Christ; and these are the ways wherein God will be met by his Remnant, his delivered Remnant.

2. What, then is it to *meet* the Lord in any of these wayes? What is it to *meet* him in the way of his Providence, his Worship, his Holiness? To *meet one* in any thing, is to *close* with him in that thing: We say herein, I meet you, when we are of one minde. To *meet the Lord* in these things, is to close with the will and minde of God in them; this is that which I would exhort you unto, yea, lay the charge of God upon you this day, even on you and your *Companions*, who are as a brand snatched out of the burning.

1. *Meet* him in his generall design of casting down all combined opposition to the Kingdom of his Son; that God in his appointed time will bring forth the Kingdom of the Lord Christ unto more glory and power, then in former days, I presume you are perswaded: what ever will be more, these six things are clearly promised.

1. *Fulness of peace unto the Gospel, and the professors thereof.* Isa. 11. 6. 7. Ch. 54. 23. Isa. 33. 20, 21. Rev. 21. 25.

2. *Purity and Beauty of Ordinances, and Gospel Worship*, Rev. 11. 1. Ch. 21 5. The Tabernacle was wholly made by appointment, Mal. 3. 3, 4. Zach. 14. 16. Rev. 21. 27. Zach. 14. 23. Isa. 35. 8.

3. *Multitudes of converts, many persons, yea Nations:* Isa. 60. 7, 8. Ch. 66. 8. Ch. 49. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Rev. 7. 6.

4. *The full casting out and rejecting of all Will worship, and their attendant abominations*, Rev. 11. 2.

5. *Professed subjection of the Nations throughout the whole world unto the Lord Christ*: Dan. 2. 44. Ch. 7. last. Isa. 60. 6, 7, 8, the Kingdoms become, &c. amongst whom his appearance shall be so glorious, that *David himself* shall be said to raign.

6. *A most glorious and dreadfull breaking of all that rise in opposition unto him*: Isa. 60. 12. never such desolations, Rev. 16. 17, 18, 19.

Now in order to the bringing in of this his Rule and Kingdom, with its attendencies, the Lord Christ goes forth in the first place to cast down the things that stand in his way, *dashing his enemies in pieces like a potters vessell*: This is a part

of the deſigne of Providence, wherein we are to meet him in theſe dayes: and here I ſhall ſpeak a word, firſt, unto them who are enabled to look through the clouds & darkneſs, whereby his paths are encompaſſed. Secondly unto them who cannot.

1. By you perſwaded to meet the Lord in this his deſign, yet to continue ſtedfaſt in helping him againſt the mighty; I ſpeak not onely to you who are in Authority, nor unto you to whom the *ſword is girded*; but unto all that wiſh well to *Sion*; We have every one *our mite* that we may caſt into this treaſury, we may be all *Princes* in this caſe; all *Iſraels* prevailes with God and men. There be three things whereby even you, who are but as the number, the *common ſouldiers* of Chriſt, may meet the Lord in this deſign.

1. By *Faith*, believe the promiſes, cloſe with them, act faith upon them, and you will believe the *Beaſt unto deſtruction*, *Antichriſt* into the *pit*, and *Magog* to ruine, believe that *the enemies of Chriſt ſhall be made his footſtool*, that the Nations ſhall be his inheritance, that he ſhall raign glorioufly in beauty, that he ſhall *ſmite in pieces the heads over divers Nations*; live in the faith of theſe things, and as it will give you the ſweetneſſe of them before they come, ſo it will haſten their comming beyond the endeavours of thouſands, yea millions of armed men.

Pſ. 110. 1, 4.
Pſa. 2. 7, 8.
Mic. 5. 3, 4.
Iſa. 60. 12.

2. *Meet him with your ſupplications*; cry unto him, as *Pſ.* 45. 3, 4, 5. *Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt mighty with glory and thy majeſty. And in thy majeſty ride proſperouſly, becauſe of truth, and meekneſs, and righteouſneſſe; and thy right hand ſhal teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are ſharp in the heart of the Kings enemies, whereby the people fall under thee.* This will make you to be the *Armies of Heaven*, that follow him in his great undertakings, *Rev.* 19. 14. It is his praying people, that are his conquering Armies that follow him: Now you find it comming, leave not pulling with all your ſtrength, leaſt it role back again, *ſhoot not two or three arrows*, and ſo give over, but never leave ſhooting, untill the enemies of the Lord be all deſtroyed.

3. Seeing it is his Goſpel whoſe advancement the Lord Jeſus aimeth at in all theſe diſpenſations, and whoſe quarrell alone he revengeth (what ever men may do) help on to the advancement of that Goſpel of his, which as formerly it was oppreſſed by the height and tyranny of the *tower of Babel*, ſo for the preſent, is exceedingly defiled and cumbred by the rubbiſh of it, being in ſome meaſure caſt down.

4. Whereas in theſe diſpenſations, it is moſt eminently and frequently in the praiſe of Chriſt ſaid, that he is juſt and righteous in all his wayes, as you may ſee in all the acclamations of the Saints upon the execution of his judgements on his enemies (*juſt and righteous art thou*) which is ſignally done on this account, becauſe the wayes whereby he doth it, are counted moſt *unrighteous* in the world: in this then alſo, is he to be met, even in the adminiſtration of juſtice, and judgment, you will otherwiſe certainly be found in a croſſe path unto him, and be born down before him. This is that wiſdom which he cals for among the judges of the earth, when he is ſet to raign on his holy hill, *Pſ.* 2. 10, 11.

2. I shall adde one word or two unto them, who either from the darknesse of the things themselves, or from the prejudices and temptations of their own spirits, are not able to discern the righteousnesse of the wayes of God but rather lift up themselves against him.

1. Then consider ye the constant appearing of God against every party that under any colour or pretence what ever have lifted up themselves for the re-inforcement of things, as in former dayes, what colour or pretence so ever they have put on, or which way soever they have turn'd themselves. God hath still appear'd against them, can you not discern his leavening their *Councels* with folly and madnes, *weakning* their hearts and hands, making the strong become as towe, and the *successful* a reproach? though they have gone from mountain to mountain to seek for *divination*, and chang'd their pretences almost as often as *Laban* did *Iacobs* wages, yet they finde neither *fraud nor enchantment* that will prevaile & doth not this proclaim that the design which God had in hand, is as yet marvelously above you.

2. Consider the constant answer of Prayers, which those which have waited on God in these dispensations (to their unspeakable consolations) have received; finding God *to be nigh unto them in all that they call upon him for:* if in this thing, *they regarded iniquity in their hearts, surely God would not have heard them:* others also cry, *even to the Lord do they cry*, but he will not bear witnesse to the abominations of their heart; ô that upon these and such like considerations, you would at last take the councel of the Psalmist, 46. 10. *be still, and know that he is God*; be silent before him, for he is risen out of his holy habitation, say, *God hath done great things for these, who hath hardned himself against him and prospered?* And this is the first particular.

2. The second design of providence in these dispensations, is evidently *to stain the glory of all flesh*, so *Isa.* 23. 9. never did the Lord any work more eminently? what sort of men is there amongst us whose glory God hath not stained? I had rather leave this unto a silent thought, then to give you particular instances of it: otherwise it were very easie to make it as clear as the sun, that God hath left neither self honour nor glory to any of the sons of men; *meet him in this also.*

1. Cease putting confidence in Man, say he is a *Worm*, and the Son of Man is but a worme, *his breath is in his nostrils, and wherein is he to be accounted of?* This use doth the Church make of mercies, *Ps.* 20. 6, 7. some trust in horses, and some in chariots, but we will remember the name of the Lord: we will not trust in Parliaments or Armies, all flesh is grasse (Isa. 40.) let it have its withering time and away; see no Wisdom but the Wisdom of God, no strength but the Strength of God, no glory but his.

2. Have any of us any glory, any *Crowns*, any gifts, any graces, any Wisdom or valour, any usefull endowments, let us cast them all down at the feet of Jesus Christ; if we look on them, if we keep them as our own, God withers all their beauty, all their glory; This do the *Elders who worship the Lamb for ever, Rom.* 4. 10, 11. say to him Lord Jesus, *thine is the Kingdom and the glory, thine are*

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all the mighty Works which have been wrought in our dayes, thine are all the means whereby they have been accompliſhed; we are nothing, we can do nothing, thou art all and in all: and this is the ſecond.

3. He aims at the ſhaking of all theſe things here below; he is taking down the rate and price of all things here below, on that which was worth 100 l. he takes his bill and writes down ſcarce the 1000 part; he hath laid his hand upon the *neſts of the Nation, and hath fitted Wings* unto all their Treaſures, and ſo eminently written vanity, and uncertainty on them all, as muſt needs leſſen their eſteem, were not men blinded by the god of this World in this alſo are we to meet the Lord

1. By getting a low eſteem of the things that God is thus ſhaking, and that upon this account, that he ſhakes them for this very end and purpoſe, that we ſhould finde neither reſt nor peace in them: perhaps thou haſt had a deſire to be *ſomebody in the World*, thou ſeeſt thy ſelf come ſhort of what thou aimedſt at; ſay now with *Mephiboſheth* upon the return of *David*, not onely half, but let *all go*, ſeeing that the Lord Jeſus ſhall raign with glory; A man may ſometimes beat a ſervant, for the inſtruction of his ſon; God hath ſhaken the enjoyments of his enemies, to lead his friends to diſ-eſteem them, God forbid, the quite contrary ſhould be found upon any of us.

2. By labouring to finde all riches and treaſures in the Lord Chriſt: the earth ſtaggers like a drunken man; the *Princes* of it are reduced to a morſell of bread; all that is *ſeen*, is of no value; doth not God direct us to the *hidden paths*, to the *treaſures* that cannot be deſtroyed? many ſay, *who Will ſhew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*

2. *Wee are to meet the Lord in the Way of his Ordinances*, in the way of Goſpel worſhip; the exalting of the Lord Chriſt herein is the iſſue of all the mighty works of God; this is given in as the end of all; *Rev.* 21, 3. *The tabernacles of God, &c.* after great ſhakings, the promiſe is ſtill of a *new Heaven and earth, Iſa.* 65. 17. *Rev.* 21. 1. and this is that the people of God put themſelves upon in the dayes wherein *Babylon is to be deſtroyed, Ierem.* 50. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. that is the work they then take in hand; the end of all is the building of the temple, *Ezek.* 47. and this is the concluſion that the people of God do make, *Iſa.* 2. 3, 4. and if this be neglected, the Lord will ſay of us, as *David* of *Naball*, *ſurely in vain have I kept theſe men, and all that they have*; to *meet* the Lord in this alſo.

1. *Inquire diligently into his mind and Will*, that you may know his paths, and be acquainted with his ſtatutes. I dare ſay, no Temptation in the world, preſſes with more colour and violence upon men under mercies, then that to a neglect of walking and holding communion with God in his Ordinances; the Divell thinks thus to revenge himſelf of the Lord Jeſus; his own yoke being broken, he thinks to prevail to the caſting away of his; Chriſt hath a *yoke* though it be *gentle & eaſie.*

2. You that do enjoy *holy Ordinances*, labour to have holy hearts anſwerable thereunto; you have *heavenly inſtitutions*, labour to have heavenly *converſations*; if we be like the world in our walking, it is no great matter, if we be like the world

in our *Worship:* it is sad walking contrary to God in his own paths; shew out the power and efficacy of all Gospel institutions, in a *frame of spirit, course of life, and equability of spirituall temper* all your dayes.

3. Keep up the power of private worship, both personall and family. I have seen many good Laws for the *Sabbath*, and hope I shal see some good examples; look what the roots are in the family, such will the fruits be in the Church and Common-wealth; if your spirits are not well manured there, you will be utterly barren elsewhere; that is done most clearly to God, which is done within dores.

3. *Meet him in the way of his holinesse*, in the cry of the Saints unto the Lord for the execution of his judgements and vengeance, they in an especiall manner invocate his holinesse, *Rev.6.10. How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* And in their rendring praises to him, they still make mention of his *holinesse and righteousnesse in all his wayes.* Though the wayes of God are commonly traduced as *unequall and unholy wayes*, yet in the close there is no property of his that he will more vindicate in all his works, then that of his holinesse; in this then we are also to meet the Lord in this day of our deliverance, the day wherein he hath wrought such great and wonderfull alterations.

This use the holy Ghost maketh upon such like dispensations, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. *Seeing that all these things, &c.* and so also *Heb.*12.27,28. *And this word yet once more, signifieth the removing of these things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear* All things opposing removed, a freedom established; therefore, *let us have grace.* God is the thrice holy one, *holy in his nature, holy* in his words, and *holy in all* his works, and he requires that his people be an holy people. To this he still urged his ancient people, from the argument of his presence amongst them: Oh that the Spirit of the Lord would bring forth this own fruit of all his dealing with us, that we might be an holy people! if we put Gods pure and clean mercies, into impure and unclean vessels, they will to us be defiled. Let us take heed of prostrating the mighty works of God to the service of our Lusts: Should we now make such conclusions to our selves, as the rich fool in the *Gospel*, and say, Well, we have now peace, and prosperity laid up for some years, *soul take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry, grow rich, and great, follow after vanity, pride, folly, uncleannes, enioy with delight the things which we have and heap up thereto,* Why, as this is to labour to draw the Lord God into a partnership with our abominations, and to inforce his mighty works to bear witnesse to our lusts, so certainly it is such a frame, as he will surely and spedily revenge: the end why God delivers us from all our enemies, is, not that we may serve our lusts and our selves without fear, but that we may serve him without fear in righteousnesse and holinesse all the dayes of our lives; let then this be the issue upon our hearts, of

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all the victories and successes, and returnes of Prayers, that we have received; that we give up our selves to the Lord in all manner of holinesse; This is that which the Lords voyce calls us unto: let not now him that is *filthy* be filthy still, let not him that is *worldly* be worldly still; let not him that is *loose*, and hath cast off the yoke of Christ, be so still; let not him that hath sought himself, do so still; let not him who hath contemned the institutions of Christ do so still; let not him that hath been lifted up above his brethren, be so still: but let every one forsake his evil way, and the iniquity that is in his hand, that we who were *not a people at all*, may be a people to the praise of the God of all: that you who rule over men, may be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord, that you may be as the light of the morning when the Sun is risen, even as a morning without clouds, as the tender grasse springing out of the earth by clear shining after raine: that we who are under rule may sit under our vines and figtrees, speaking well of the Name of God, and labouring to carry on the Kingdom of the *Prince of Peace*, even every one as we *are called and abiding therein with God*: that as when you sought this mercy of God which we rejoice in, in solemn humbling of your selves before the Lord, I made it appear unto you, that it was the *remnant of Iacob, Gods secret and holy ones*, lying in the bowels of the Nation, that must be the rise of all our deliverances, so we would now, every one strive to be of that number, for they alone enjoy the sweetnesse of this and every mercy.

2 JY 64

FINIS.